

often deeply stained. The obstruction sometimes lasts for a considerable time, but, with the exception of mere drowsiness, no head-symptoms are developed. This is still more strikingly evidenced in cases in which the ductus choledochus has been permanently closed. This has been brought about sometimes by the impaction of gall-stones; at other times, by the entire closure of the duct itself. In such cases the ducts, nearer the liver than the obstruction, are observed to be enormously dilated, and gorged with bile, which also fills the minute branches within the liver. Here the bile, if formed, must be re-absorbed, or the biliary congestion may so interfere with the secretion as to produce a species of suppression. In either case the blood will have been for a long period subject to the noxious influence of the bile mingled with it.

If, then, the mere residence of bilious matter, often to a large extent, within the blood cannot explain the different results of the cases, to what are we to attribute them? It is evident from their history that the noxious influence was sudden in its production, for the head-symptoms usually supervened when no previous idea of danger existed.

Dr. Budd has offered two speculations on the subject:—"The first is, that these symptoms are caused by the *direct* action of the poison which caused the jaundice. A difficulty is the sudden and unexpected occurrence of the head symptoms after the jaundice had lasted some time. It is clear that some deadly agency came then suddenly to act on the nervous system. If this were the poison which had before arrested the secretion of the liver, it must have been retained in the liver, like globules of pus or mercury, and, from some cause or other, have been suddenly liberated to exert its action on the nervous system. An other supposition that offers a better explanation is, that in consequence of *decomposition* of the retained principles of the bile, or of the broken up hepatic cells, some peculiar noxious agent is involved, which is the real cause of the malignant symptoms."—p. 261. 2nd Ed.

Not agreeing with the pathology here given, I shall first refer to the remarkable anatomical condition of the liver, and then offer an explanation deduced from it, and quite sufficient to account for the formidable symptoms occasionally met with. The liver is found always greatly disorganized, and generally much reduced in size, a circumstance which has led the celebrated Rokitansky—though I think improperly—to give this condition the name of "yellow atrophy." This term implies an alteration of the nutrient function, and is usually understood as denoting action in a gradual manner, while, in those cases of fatal jaundice, the change is rapid and disorganising. In the case of Mrs. C., the liver weighed but 2 lb. 4 oz., while a healthy liver weighs about 4 lbs.: and its substance was so soft as readily to break down under the fingers into